

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

Legislative Policy: Issues Affecting Older Adults

**Policy
Number**

M-47

Page

1 of 4

Purpose

To establish the Board of Supervisors' legislative policy regarding issues affecting the well-being of older adults and to provide guidance to the County's legislative representatives when advocating the County's interests to legislators, other elected officials and policy makers.

Background

The Older Americans Act became law in 1965. It established a series of broad policy objectives designed to meet the needs of older adults. In 1973, Congress expanded the scope of activities to include nutrition programs and area agencies on aging. The Act mandated the establishment of Advisory Councils to advise area agencies on aging regarding all matters relating to the development and administration of the area plan.

Older adults, by means of the Advisory Council to Aging & Independence Services, have shared their wisdom and have provided guidance to the County on many issues affecting older adults. The Aging & Independence Services Advisory Council's primary responsibility is to advise Aging & Independence Services on the development and implementation of the Area Plan on Aging. The Board of Supervisors adopted the Area Plan for 2001-2009 on May 17, 2005, which identifies the priorities and direction for County activities on behalf of older adults.

In 2006, the Older Americans Act was reauthorized through 2011, acknowledging the growth of the elderly population and the vital programs that serve seniors.

Since 1973, the County of San Diego has responded to the concerns of older adults by establishing programs to provide better support for consumers. A number of County services were added to Aging & Independence Services for an improved system of care. These services expanded the role of Aging & Independence Services beyond older adults to also include disabled adults.

Policy

The legislative policy of the Board of Supervisors regarding issues affecting older adults and persons with disabilities is to:

1. Support legislation that would help older and disabled adults maintain, strengthen, and safeguard their independence and enhance their involvement in the community through a range of life options and other appropriate services including support, employment and social interaction programs.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject	Policy Number	Page
	M-47	2 of 4

Legislative Policy: Issues Affecting Older Adults

2. Support legislation that would ensure the rights of older adults and disabled to obtain protective and legal services through information, advocacy and adult protective programs.
3. Support legislation that would enhance the quality of life for older and disabled adults, including those with special needs, through support, employment, and social interaction programs that are responsive to individual requirements.
4. Support legislation that fosters intergenerational collaboration on public policy and programs to improve the lives of children, youth, the disabled and older adults thus strengthening the community overall.
5. Support legislation that would establish a comprehensive and coordinated system and provide options for long term care activities that will secure and maintain maximum independence and dignity in a home environment, remove individual and social barriers to economic and personal independence, and provide a continuum of care for vulnerable older adults.
6. Support legislation that would provide maximum local control of programs that serve older adults and the disabled.
7. Support legislation that would provide adequate funding for mandated programs for senior and disabled populations, including State-only funded programs and programs authorized under the Older Americans Act.
8. Support legislation that includes a return to full funding for Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) programs and increases the SSBG allocation to keep up with inflation and population growth.
9. Support legislation that restores adequate and full funding for the Adult Protective Services Program.
10. Support legislation that would increase base funding of the Ombudsman Program.
11. Support legislation that provides adequate and full funding for programs authorized under the Older Americans Act, with consideration given to caseload growth, cost-of-living adjustments and equitable distribution of funds to those areas with large senior populations.
12. Support legislation that would remove barriers for seniors wishing to continue employment. For example, many seniors need training or re-training to engage in the workforce, current laws do not allow individuals to receive their pensions while working, and benefits like Medicare, short & long term disability and life insurance are impacted with a phased retirement.
13. Support legislation to fully fund mandated investigations of reports of abuse/neglect in various facilities by Long-Term Care Ombudsmen.
14. Support legislation that would provide a comprehensive response to elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

Legislative Policy: Issues Affecting Older Adults

**Policy
Number**

M-47

Page

3 of 4

15. Support legislation that would promote the psychological, social, and physical, well-being of older adults and persons with disabilities, through the expansion of mental health services and health-related programs, including nutrition, physical fitness, prevention and rehabilitation, which is cost-effective and responsive to demonstrated needs.
16. Support legislation that would promote the economic well-being of older adults and persons with disabilities.
17. Support legislation that would provide exemptions, in grant calculations for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other benefit programs, for stipends received by older adults and the disabled for participating in volunteer opportunities in the community.
18. Support legislation that provides funding for costs associated with the construction and furnishing of the Edgemoor Health Facility including computer software to accommodate patient services.

In Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

19. Support legislation that would transfer full financial responsibility for the County's share of IHSS to the State.
20. Support legislation that would increase or transfer full funding of the employer of record costs for the IHSS Program to the State.
21. Oppose legislation that would transfer financial responsibility to the County or reduce State participation in the IHSS Program.
22. Oppose legislation that would increase costs to the County for the IHSS program.
23. Oppose legislation that would shift costs to the County for the IHSS program.
24. Oppose legislation that would increase County workload for the IHSS program.
25. Support legislation that would allow the Department of Justice to perform criminal records checks using the FBI nation-wide search process for IHSS home care providers.

Responsible Departments

Health and Human Services Agency
Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-14.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

**Policy
Number**

Page

Legislative Policy: Issues Affecting Older Adults

M-47

4 of 4

References

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